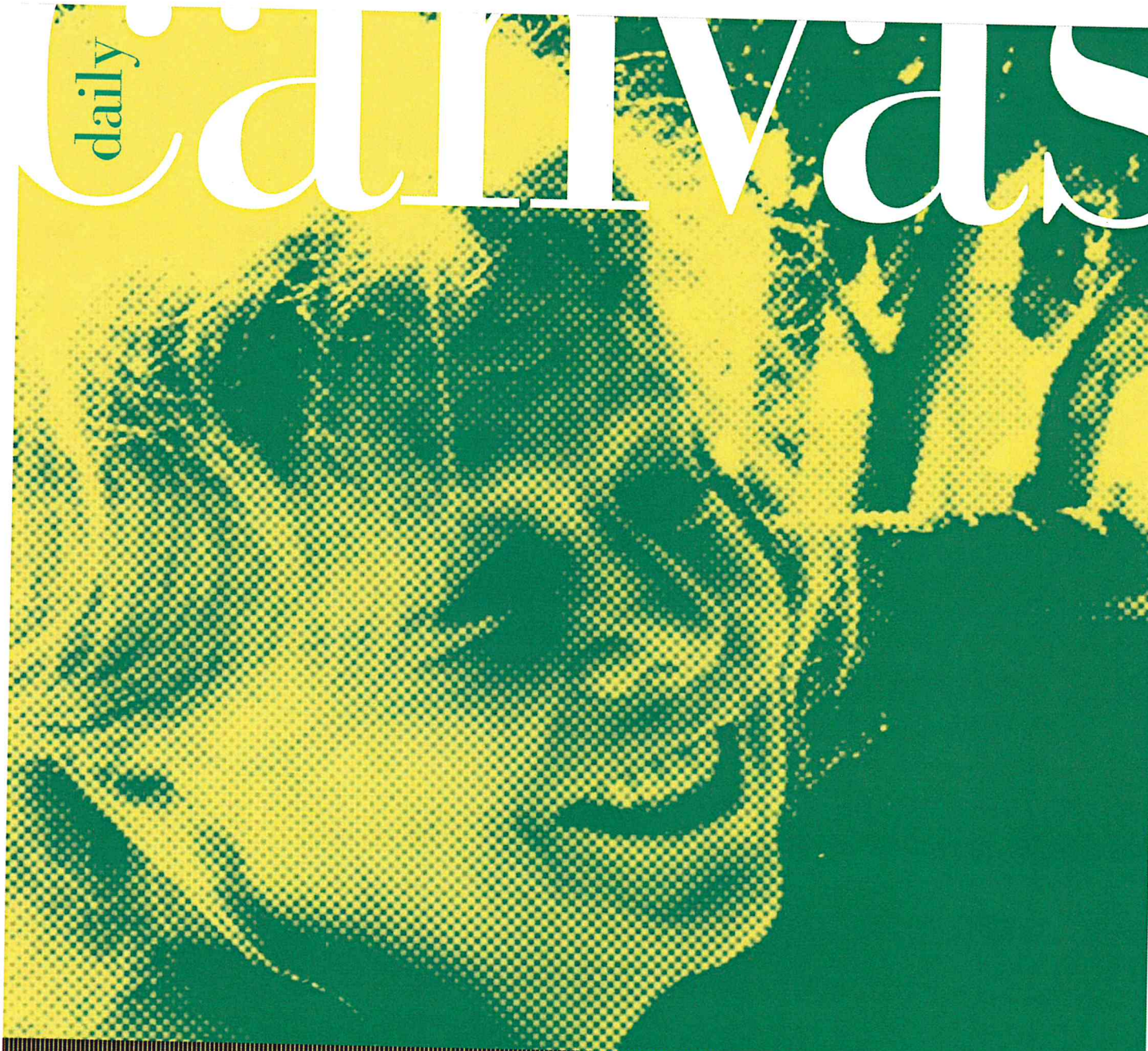


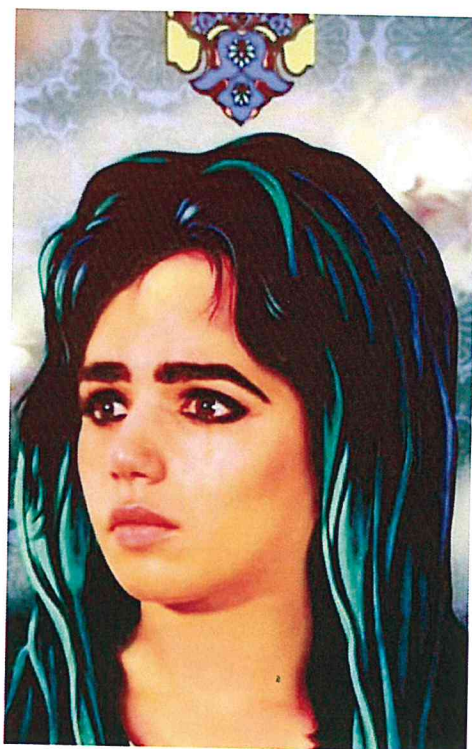
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19 MARCH 2010 | ISSUE 4 | ART DUBAI EDITION

- 04 Q&A WITH ALICE AYCOCK
- 06 THEN & NOW: ARTISTIC METAMORPHOSES
- 08 POLITICAL ARTWORKS
- 10 SOLD: ROUNDUP OF DAY THREE'S SALES
- 12 GALLERY PRICING: THE INSIDE STORY
- 14 PREVIEW: *EDGE OF ARABIA*
- 18 SPOTLIGHT: VIDEO ART
- 20 OPINION: LAILA SHAWA
- 21 5 MINUTES WITH NAZIF TOPCUOĞLU AND MOUNIR FATMI



A still from Shoja Azari's *Shamalles* series, 2010. Courtesy Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller Gallery, New York and the artist.

SPOTLIGHT: VIDEO ART

A substantial number of participating galleries showcase video works at Art Dubai, proving that this medium is increasingly popular among private and public collectors.

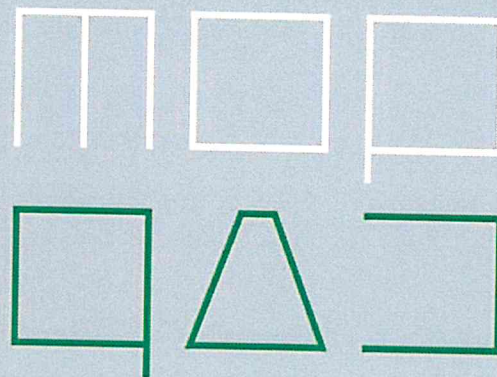
At last year's Art Dubai and Abu Dhabi Art fairs, the **Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller (LTMH, B7)** gallery brought large paintings of burning oil fields, against which images are projected – a joint collaboration between Iranian artists Shahram Karimi and **Shoja Azari**. Aside from Iranian collectors quickly rushing to buy these video works, members of the UAE royal family are just some of a growing international collector base. Powerful and politically charged as the works are, this year, the gallery brings a new piece by New York-based Azari – which, while political in context, is also a videographic demonstration of female empowerment. In five 'screens', priced at \$22,000 apiece, Azari has superimposed the face of a woman within the face of a Muslim imam and has even used the face of his wife, Shirin Neshat, in one of the screens. "The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) gave women in Islam a lot of importance and wanted them to be respected and revered," says the gallery's Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller, "and in this work, Azari is saying that this is

not the case with women in Iran now." The piece, part of a selection which will be exhibited at Azari's upcoming solo show at LTMH in May, has attracted a great deal of interest from collectors and institutions alike. "Video work is just so beautiful," says Heller, "because more than one thing happens at a time." The gallery also represents Iranian artist **Farideh Lashai** who, aside from abstract paintings, has done a series of works with projected video animation which was shown at last year's Art Dubai through Oman's Al-Bareh Gallery. That body of work, *I Don't Want to be a Tree, I Want to be its Meaning*, takes its name from Orhan Pamuk's novel, *My Name is Red*, and recounts the classic Persian tale of tragic lovers, *Leyli and Majnoon*. Indeed, video work is gaining more prominence and attention among a wide collector base. "It's essentially a moving painting," says **Gallery SUN Contemporary's** (B20) Eunyoung Kim of video art, "you're buying a CD which is a physical object and we sell the electronic equipment with the video to make the buying process easy for collectors." The Seoul-based gallery has brought seven video works by Korean artist **Lee Sung**



MAGIC OF PERSIA CONTEMPORARY ART PRIZE 2011

The Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize (MOP CAP) is a global search for the new generation of contemporary Iranian artists.



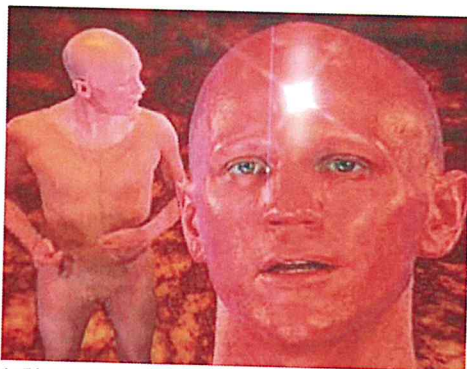
MOP CAP 2009 winner Mahmoud Bakhshi Moakhar will have a solo show in an exhibition space at the Saatchi Gallery, London, from 27th of September to 10th of October, 2010.

Nominations for MOP CAP 2011 have begun.

To follow the prize please visit

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A still from Bjorn Melhus's *Hecho En Mexico*, 2009. Blue-ray video, 4'06 minutes. Courtesy Dirimart, Istanbul.



A still from Lee Lee Nam's video *New-Sosaewon*, 2009. Courtesy Hakgojae Gallery, Seoul.

Hun – six small ones are priced at \$2400 each and are an edition of 12 and a large one is priced at \$15,000 and is an edition of six. "Hun's is not a typical form of storytelling as he contrasts contemporary society with traditional painting and all of this is deeply rooted in Korean history." So what is it that attracts people to video art? "It's new and it has deep meaning and lots of layers in those meanings," says Kim. Another Korean gallery, **Hakgojae** (A26), also brought works by a Korean video artist, **Lee Lee Nam**. Placed at the booth's exterior, in the 2009 piece a tranquil lake witnesses the four seasons of the year, accompanied by classical Korean music, "gets the most attention" says the gallery's Oh Kyungja of *New-Sosaewon*. "No one does video like he does," she adds, "and we want people to see his work." The \$28,000 video combines aspects of Korea's past against contemporary practices, much in the same vein as *Hun*. The gallery had brought Nam's *The Conversation Between Monet and Sochee*, a three-minute and 30-second video to Art Dubai last year but sold it during the fair's vernissage this year to an Indian collector. "Everyone is interested in video art, however, Westerners in particular respond well to Nam's work and I think that aside from discovering him as a new artist, his work is a new thing altogether," says Kyungja. The 40-year-old artist, who lives in Seoul, graduated with a degree in sculpture but soon found that video was his calling. He frequently uses aspects of nature within his video work. Nature is a theme that very much resonates in works by a number of video artists, including Finnish **Tea Mäkipää** at **Galeria JM** (B17). In a recent video work shown at the gallery space in Malaga, Mäkipää had placed a video camera on a reindeer's head and then set the animal free.

After editing the work down to 20 minutes and 35 seconds, the piece features Petteri (Rudolph in Finnish) running wild in Mäkipää's land. At the booth, however, Mäkipää shows three works, one of which, the video *Catwalk*, an edition of six and priced at \$15,700, complements her large photo-montage piece, *World of Plenty*. "It's all about nature, humans and animals and harmonious coexistence," says the gallery's Lucy Hobbs.

So what has the feedback on video art been like at Art Dubai? "People are hesitant about video in general. They come in and look, but get bored fast and leave," says **Dirimart's** (A25) Guygu Demir. The Istanbul-based gallery is showing a work by Norwegian video artist, **Bjorn Melhus**, which is "a sort of psychedelic, drug-induced experience," says Demir. Psychedelic indeed, as Melhus, who only works in video, seemingly resembles plastic dolls and has a conversation with himself accompanied by alternative music. Priced at \$480, the artist also reserves the right to make an infinite number of copies of his work, making his oeuvre, "very rare, conceptually, but very affordable too." Dirimart also shows another video artist, Bulgarian-born Turkish **Ergin Çavusoglu** who has just been nominated for the Artes Mundi prize in Wales. Pairing video with sculptures by other artists, this piece is one part of a five-channel series. Each part depicts a musician playing an instrument, and "when all five video works are shown together, they complete a song," says Demir. There is no denying that video work is hard to grasp, especially as it is a medium with limitless scope and range, as well as one that is constantly evolving with newer and better technology. The misconception is that buyers of video art are institutions, whereas in actuality, private collectors are an increasingly growing buyer base. **Myrna Ayadi, Canvas**



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Image: Installation view, Yutaka Sone, *Secret for Snow Leopard*, Parasol unit 2007, Photograph by Hugo Glendinning

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